



## NEWS RELEASE

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## NEBRASKA 2012 STUDENT WRITING RESULTS RELEASED

- *Writing results for grades 8 and 11 are based on a new, more rigorous process focused on college and career readiness.*

Writing test results for Nebraska students were released today by the Nebraska Department of Education.

The results for students at grades 8 and 11 are based on a new, more rigorous testing process that also measured new writing standards focused on college and career readiness.

About 63 percent of Nebraska's public school 8<sup>th</sup> graders and about 62 percent of the 11<sup>th</sup> graders met or exceeded the new writing standards.

Under the scoring method used since 2001, 92 percent of the state's 4<sup>th</sup> graders met or exceeded the writing standards. Next year, 4<sup>th</sup> graders' writing responses will be scored using a new analytic scoring method and a new cut score will be effective.

The writing test results for the 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade establish new, baseline data that can be used to measure improvement in future years, however, the 2011-2012 results should not be compared to results from previous years because of the differences in the testing process.

"Our expectations went up. We raised the achievement bar," said Nebraska Education Commissioner Roger Breed said. "We are confident results will improve under the new process."

"Since we first began testing student writing skills under the previous system, going back to 2001, the writing results have improved consistently," Breed said. "Under the new process, teachers will receive more information than ever before about individual student writing skills in the areas of content, organization, word choice and conventions, allowing them to adjust instruction and improve writing skills."

This year, 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students also were asked to write online and 'on demand,' writing, untimed, on a single day as opposed to writing in two sessions spread over two days, which allowed students to create a draft one day and to refine their work the following day. On demand writing represents the kind of writing expected of high school graduates in college and in the workplace, better preparing

Nebraska students for a successful future. The new writing standards also are more responsive to the needs of the business community.

“Writing remains an essential skill in the workplace and at college,” Breed said. “Our graduates entering the business world must have strong writing skills. Young people attending college will find themselves writing in every class.”

Statewide writing results for Nebraska public school districts and school buildings are available on the Nebraska Department of Education’s homepage at: <http://www.education.ne.gov/>. Federal data related to No Child Left Behind requirements as well as data showing student performance by racial and ethnic groups will be released next fall.